

Ballineaspig Parish Bulletin



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16th August, 2020

20th Sunday (A)

16th ~August, 2020

Gospel Matt: 15: 21-28

Reflection

Who is the Canaanite Woman of Our Day?

Several of the miracle stories in the gospels have a straightforward focus of showing how the compassionate Jesus came to the peoples' help by curing their sick and on occasion, even restoring life. This Sunday's gospel has another focus. In this story the woman looking for a cure for her daughter's illness is not a Jew but a Canaanite. Over the years the Hebrew Jewish people had been at war with the Canaanites over territory and control. The Canaanites lost and were vanquished. In the area where winner takes all, they were reduced to a menial state.

The Jews saw themselves as God's privileged people and the Canaanites as second class by birth and history. Jesus was reared in that ingrained culture of superiority. So at first sight, it seems that Jesus' initial inclination was to reserve the healing love of God for His own people. The human temptation was towards racism but the courageous, persistent caring love of the mother cut through the historic indoctrination. She alerted Jesus to the wonder that we are all equally God's children sharing in the Father's healing care.



The first miracle transformed prejudice into respect and it was worked by a mother's love. The second miracle was the curing of the little girl and it was performed by Jesus.

The parallels for our time are stark.

Could the people in direct provision be the Canaanites of our time?

Could the Black Lives Matter movement be alerting us to our own cultural and ingrained prejudices?

Could the homeless of today be longing for a Canaanite woman (or an Irish father) to plead their cause effectively?

In the culture of our time, will the example of the Canaanite woman dispel the prejudice in my heart and inspire a life giving respect in my daily life?

Who will lead the way?

Will You?

Fr. Tom Clancy

